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Educational Websites

1. <http://www.ask500people.com/>

This websites is a great tool to help students understand other parts of the world. You can type in questions and get responses from around the globe in minutes. The interactive map provides a great visual for students and allows them to see exactly where responses are coming from. Ask 500 people is most effective for middle school and high school students because it is similar to the popular ways these students communicate such as texting and instant messaging. However, the website is so versatile because you are doing the questioning; it can be used in elementary classrooms too. Classroom activities are endless with this website. Furthermore, I believe this website would be best utilized in the classroom to show the comparison of the American culture to other diverse cultures around the globe. It is one thing to stand and lecture to the class about cultural differences and another to get real responses from students in that culture. In conclusion, this website offers a fun and exciting way to receive information about other cultures directly from people in those countries.

1. <http://www.visuwords.com/>

Visuwords is an online dictionary and thesaurus that is a great aid in a multitude of tasks for teachers, students, and parents. The wonderful thing about this website is it that the user can make graphics to help him/her understand concepts and/or terms in any subject area. Due to the fact that the website is an interactive tool it can be used from kindergarten through 12th grade. I don’t think kindergarten students would be able to navigate the site and create his/her own graphics, but teachers could use this resource to create visual aids for instruction. In addition, I believe this online tool would be best used to have students learn new vocabulary terms. Students can look up definitions and synonyms for terms and create a visual graphic to help him/her understand the vocabulary term by using the tools on Visuword. Finally, the website is a great tool for teachers because you can create visual aids for any lesson in minutes. Differentiating instruction is crucial in today’s classroom and thus visuals created using this website provide one way teachers can accomplish this.

1. <http://www.xtranormal.com/>

Xtranormal.com is my favorite website from the list. This website allows you to create animated videos with voices and music. You can create characters and bring them to life. First, you get to choose from hundreds of characters that you customize. In addition, you control their emotions, gestures, and voices. It gives you two options for dialogue: type or speak. Finally, you get to choose backgrounds for your story including sound effects and camera angles. The possibilities are endless with all the choices you get in creating videos. This website can be used in any grade and with any subject. It is a fun way to introduce new material, review, or have the students create movie clips with material. For example, students could bring his/her written stories to life to share with the class. Furthermore, I think it would be useful in science to have students create a clip of what they observed in an experiment. I could spend hours making fun and educational videos for students.

1. <http://www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp>

Fodey.com is another great website that has many uses in the classroom and is absolutely free. This websites allows you to create newspaper articles, animated characters that talk, text generators, and slideshows. Probably the best tool is the newspaper generator because it can be used in so many scenarios. For example, students could create newspaper articles as a summary of unit to show understanding of the content. In addition, the teacher can use the newspaper generator to provide a fun and interesting way to give information to students. This website also allows the user to type in text bubbles and create animated characters. It does not have as many character choices and options as xtranormal.com. However, it is a much simpler procedure that could be a good starting point and is great for younger students. Not only can this website save the teacher time, but it is also creates a product that engages students.

1. <http://www.kerpoof.com/>

Kerpoof is definitely unique in that is has so much to offer in one place. This website has it all from spelling to storytelling to coloring to card making to movie making to lesson plans and so much more. Kerpoof offers a wide range of activities and teacher planning tools on one website. The website is fairly easy to navigate and is useful in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. However, I believe the lower grades would get the most out of the colorfully animated website. The spell a picture can be used in spelling, science, and vocabulary. It allows children to relate topics, items, and/or environments to one another. In addition, I would use the lesson plans to get ideas for instruction in my classroom. Furthermore, Kerpoof would be a wonderful resource for parents to monitor students at home if internet is available. Not to be intended as homework, but just a fun way to reinforce what they are doing at school. Overall, Kerpoof is a vivid, interactive, and navigable website that offers a wide range of activities and tools useful for teachers, students, and parents.